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(BUSH-WEEKLY)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- CIA DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH SAID WEDNESDAY THAT AN AVIATION WEEKLY "MALICIOUSLY SLANDERED" SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER, INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS AND HIM FOR CHARGING THEY "SLANTED" ESTIMATES ON A SOVIET BOMBER'S RANGE.

IN A STRONGLY WORDED LETTER TO ROBERT WOLTZ, EDITOR OF AVIATION WEEK & SPACE TECHNOLOGY, BUSH DENOUNCED A STORY IT PRINTED LAST WEEK QUOTING WHITE HOUSE AND ADMINISTRATION SOURCES AS SAYING THAT KISSINGER ORDERED THE CIA TO "SLANT" INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES ON THE LONGRANGE CAPABILITIES OF A NEW SOVIET TUPOLEV BOMBER, KNOWN BY THE NATO CODENAME "BACKFIRE."

KISSINGER, IN A LETTER OF HIS OWN DATED SEPT 15 AND RELEASED FOR PUBLICATION WEDNESDAY, DESCRIBED THE ARTICLE "AS A MALICIOUS INVENTION."

"THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN," HE WROTE, "HAS CHARACTERIZED IT AS AN 'OUTRAGEOUS LIE.' THIS IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT."

BUSH SAID THE CHARGE "IMPUGNS THE INTEGRITY OF THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTION PROCESS, OF SECRETARY KISSINGER, OF MYSELF AS THE PRESIDENT'S CHIEF INTELLIGENCE ADVISER, AND MOST IMPORTANT, OF ALL THE INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS WHO SERVE THIS COUNTRY."

"SPECIFICALLY," HE WROTE, "I HAVE NEVER RECEIVED NOR WOULD I EVER ENTERTAIN A SUGGESTION, FROM WHATEVER SOURCE AND FOR WHATEVER REASON, TO SLANT THE INTELLIGENCE PRODUCT ... IN ONE SHORT ARTICLE, SECRETARY KISSINGER, CIA ANALYSTS AND, BY INFERENCE, MYSELF, HAVE BEEN MALICIOUSLY SLANDERED."

THE CIA DIRECTOR SAID HE HOPED THE WEEKLY WOULD PUBLISH HIS LETTER "TO PARTIALLY CORRECT THE DAMAGE."

AVIATION WEEK, IN COMMENTING ON EARLIER DENIALS OF THE STORY, SAID IN ITS CURRENT ISSUE PUBLISHED BEFORE BUSH'S LETTER THAT THE ARTICLE HAD BEEN RECHECKED AND FOUND ACCURATE.

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